

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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R 130931Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2714

INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 2060

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: RES

TAGS: ASEAN, ID

SUBJ: MALIK/PANGGABEAN STATEMENTS ON ASEAN SECURITY ROLE

1. SUMMARY: IN RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS, INDONESIAN OFFICIALS HAVE DOWNPLAYED GOI INTEREST IN BROADENING ASEAN'S ROLE IN REGIONAL SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

2.BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:IN COMMENTS TO REPORTERS FEBRUARY 11 FOLLOWING PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS BY THAI AMBASSADOR TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO, DEFENSE MINISTER (AND AT THAT TIME ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER) PANGGABEAN DENIED THERE WERE ANY PLANS FOR ASEAN NATIONS TO ESTABLISH JOINT DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE ENTIRELY INAPPROPRIATE GIVEN CURRENT CONDIDITONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND WOULD ONLY PROVOKE ASEAN'S ADVERSARIES TO BUILD UP THEIR OWN DEFENSES. HOWEVER, PANGGABEAN, WHO SAID HIS REMARKS WERE PROMPTED BY FOREIGN PRESS REPORTS PREDICTING
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INCREASED ASEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION, STRESSED

THAT BILATERAL DEFENSE COOPERATION AMONG
INDIVIDUAL ASEAN COUNTRIES WOULD
CONTINUE AND BE STRENGTHENED IF NECESSARY.

3. ON RETURN FROM ASEAN FONMINS MEETING FEBRUARY 12,
FONMIN MALIK ECHOED PANGGABEAN'S STATEMENTS.
SPEAKING TO NEWSMEN AT AIRPORT, MALIK SAID ASEAN
DEFENSE PACT NEVER DISCUSSED IN PAST AND WOULD
NOT BE IN FUTURE. HE ADDED THAT TALK ABOUT AN
ASEAN ALLIANCE CAME ONLY FROM SOURCES OUTSIDE
ASEAN. MALIK ALSO CONFIRMED THAT PRIOR TO SUMMIT,
SENIOR OFFICIALS WOULD MEET (APPARENTLY IN JAKARTA) FEBRUARY 18-19
AND FONMINS FEBRUARY 21 IN BALI TO MAKE FINAL REVIEW OF
PREPARATIONS.

4. ASKED ABOUT POSSIBILITY INDOCHINA STATES MIGHT
JOIN ASEAN, MALIK SAID ASEAN HAD NEVER CLOSED DOOR
TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BUT THAT
MEMBERSHIP FOR INDOCHINA NATIONS DEPENDED ON
ACTIONS OF THOSE COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO PRESS
REPORTS MALIK HAD MORE TO SAY ABOUT INDOCHINA
DURING STOPOVER IN KUALA LUMPUR ON WAY FROM HOME
BANGKOK. THERE HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT
DIFFERENCES IN IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL SYSTEM WOULD
BE NO OBSTACLE TO MEMBERSHIP FOR INDOCHINA STATES
AND THAT ONCE THEY HAD SORTED OUT INTERNAL
PROBLEMS, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO JOIN IN
ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ALLIANCE WITH ASEAN.
HE ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT INDOCHINA NATIONS
WERE BEGINNING TO RESPOND TO GESTURES OF
FRIENDSHIP FROM ASEAN BUT DID NOT SPECIFY
HOW. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: COMMENT: PANGGABEAN/MALIK
REMARKS ON ASEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION REPRESENT NO
CHANGE IN OFFICIAL GOI POSITION. HOWEVER, THEY
PROBABLY REFLECT FURTHER GOI EFFORT TO SMOOTH
RESENTMENT OF OTHER ASEAN NATIONS AT BEHIND-THE-
SCENES GOI PRESSURES FOR BROADER COOPERATIVE
MEASURES, SUCH AS INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGE, AND FOR
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AGREED ASEAN ASSESSMENT OF SECURITY THREAT. FACT
THAT PANGGABEAN JOINED IN STATEMENTS TENDS GIVE
THEM MORE AUTHORITY, SINCE INDONESIAN MILITARY
KNOWN TO BE PRIME MOVERS BEHIND PAST GOI EFFORTS
TO FORGE CLOSER DEFENSE TIES AMONG ASEAN NATIONS.
IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT MALIK'S REMARKS ON
INDOCHINA PRESAGE MORE RECEPTIVE
GOI ATTITUDE TOWARD THOSE COUNTRIES, SINCE

INDONESIAN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT REMAINS
EXTREMELY WARY OF ANY LINKAGE BETWEEN ASEAN
AND COMMUNIST REGIMES IN REGION.
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